GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2843
ANSWERED ON:10.03.2003
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY
SUNIL KHAN

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the Wildlife Conservation Strategy-2002;

(b) whether the recommendations in this regard have since been implemented; and

(c) the steps the Government have taken to stop infiltration of wild elephant from Bihar to Midnapore and Bankura district every year?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JU DEV)

(a) The salient features of the Wildlife Conservation Strategy-2002 are:

1. Wildlife and Forests shall be declared priority sector at the national level for which funds should be earmarked.

2. Diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes from critical and ecologically fragile wildlife habitat shall not be allowed.

3. Lands falling within 10 kms. of the boundaries of national parks and sanctuaries should be notified as Eco-fragile zones.

4. Removal of encroachment and illegal activities from within forestlands and Protected Areas.

5. The settlement of rights in national parks and sanctuaries should not be used to exclude or reduce the areas that are crucial and integral parts of the wildlife habitat.

6. Law enforcement agencies must ensure quick and deterrent punishment to those indulging in wildlife offences.

7. More than 2000 vacant posts in the frontline staff of Protected Areas shall be filled immediately and provided basic infrastructure for efficient discharge of duties.

(b) The actions taken to implement the strategy include:

1. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended making the punishment more severe under the Act.

2. A National Forest Commission has been set up to look into restructuring, reform and strengthening the entire forest set up and affiliated institutions in the country.

3. Prime Minster has addressed all the Chief Ministers of the states regarding urgent need to fill up the vacant posts in Forest Departments.

4. Secretary, Environment and Forests, has written to the Chief Secretaries of all the states regarding declaring forests and wildlife as priority sector and filling up of vacant posts in Forest Departments.

5. Secretary, Environment and Forests, has also written to the Secretary, Planning Commission, regarding declaring forests and wildlife as priority sector with earmarked funds.

(c) Elephants migrate into Midnapore and Bankura districts of West Bengal from Jharkhand. Migration is associated with the natural behaviour of elephants and is largely governed by changing availability of food and water in their habitat. Enrichment of habitat reduces the need for migration. Habitat improvement works like raising enrichment plantations, and, soil and moisture conservation activities, have been taken up in Jharkhand to provide elephants better habitat. Also, methods like physically driving away the migrating elephant herd and keeping a constant vigil against migrating elephants during the season, are adopted to keep the elephants away from entering into West Bengal area.